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SECRET [redacted] 25X1

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 8761-82
29 October 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

25X1 FROM: [redacted] A/NIO/NESA

SUBJECT: Impending Debate on Jordanian Arms Sales

1. NSC and Defense officials have informed us that they hope to go forward to Congress sometime this fall with the arms package for Jordan that has long been under consideration. This sale of advanced fighter aircraft (F5Gs now and F16s and Mobile I-Hawks later) will play a critical role in King Hussein's calculations regarding what role Jordan should play in the President's peace initiative and how much support the US can deliver.

2. Several staff contacts of mine in the Senate have commented that they anticipate any Congressional debate over the Jordanian arms sale will be more intense than the Saudi AWACS controversy. As one noted, the Israeli lobby sees the Jordanian sale as a "make or break" test of Israel's influence in the Congress and a battle in which Israel must "pull out all the stops" to block the deal. Another commented that without a forthcoming statement by Hussein on the peace process, any arms sale doesn't have a "prayer" of passing.

3. One way to prevent such a bruising battle may be for the administration to strike a deal with Prime Minister Begin offering forward movement on the pending F-16 sale to Israel for acquiescence on the Jordanian deal but most observers on the Hill feel it is unlikely Begin will agree to such an arrangement.

-- For Begin the Jordanian arms deal is a chance to undermine the US peace initiative by challenging publicly Hussein's credentials as a peacemaker and, in turn, undermining the King's confidence in US support.

-- Defense Minister Sharon earlier this year said Tel Aviv cannot "allow" any sophisticated arms sales to Amman from the US.

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25X1 This Memo is classified SECRET [redacted] in its entirety. SECRET

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4. As happened during the AWACS dispute, the intelligence community may be called upon to provide an assessment of Jordan's military capability, the Syrian threat to Amman and implications of a sale for the Jordanian-Israeli balance (including possible clashes with Israeli overflights). NSC staffers have informally suggested to me that such an assessment would be useful in the past and might be formally requested after Tuesday's elections.

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